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20995 7590 02/25/2010

KNOBBE MARTENS OLSON & BEAR LLP  
2040 MAIN STREET  
FOURTEENTH FLOOR  
IRVINE, CA 92614

EXAMINER

NGUYEN, DUSTIN

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2454

DATE MAILED: 02/25/2010

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/648,474	08/21/2000	Brian Mark Shuster	KM0345.007CP1	5826

TITLE OF INVENTION: METHOD, APPARATUS AND SYSTEM FOR HOSTING INFORMATION EXCHANGE GROUPS ON A WIDE AREA NETWORK

APPLN. TYPE	SMALL ENTITY	ISSUE FEE DUE	PUBLICATION FEE DUE	PREV. PAID ISSUE FEE	TOTAL FEE(S) DUE	DATE DUE
nonprovisional	NO	\$1510	\$0	\$0	\$1510	05/25/2010

**THE APPLICATION IDENTIFIED ABOVE HAS BEEN EXAMINED AND IS ALLOWED FOR ISSUANCE AS A PATENT. PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS CLOSED.** THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWANCE IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS. THIS APPLICATION IS SUBJECT TO WITHDRAWAL FROM ISSUE AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE OFFICE OR UPON PETITION BY THE APPLICANT. SEE 37 CFR 1.313 AND MPEP 1308.

**THE ISSUE FEE AND PUBLICATION FEE (IF REQUIRED) MUST BE PAID WITHIN THREE MONTHS FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS NOTICE OR THIS APPLICATION SHALL BE REGARDED AS ABANDONED. THIS STATUTORY PERIOD CANNOT BE EXTENDED.** SEE 35 U.S.C. 151. THE ISSUE FEE DUE INDICATED ABOVE DOES NOT REFLECT A CREDIT FOR ANY PREVIOUSLY PAID ISSUE FEE IN THIS APPLICATION. IF AN ISSUE FEE HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN PAID IN THIS APPLICATION (AS SHOWN ABOVE), THE RETURN OF PART B OF THIS FORM WILL BE CONSIDERED A REQUEST TO REAPPLY THE PREVIOUSLY PAID ISSUE FEE TOWARD THE ISSUE FEE NOW DUE.

## HOW TO REPLY TO THIS NOTICE:

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If the SMALL ENTITY is shown as YES, verify your current SMALL ENTITY status:

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B. If the status above is to be removed, check box 5b on Part B - Fee(s) Transmittal and pay the PUBLICATION FEE (if required) and twice the amount of the ISSUE FEE shown above, or

If the SMALL ENTITY is shown as NO:

A. Pay TOTAL FEE(S) DUE shown above, or

B. If applicant claimed SMALL ENTITY status before, or is now claiming SMALL ENTITY status, check box 5a on Part B - Fee(s) Transmittal and pay the PUBLICATION FEE (if required) and 1/2 the ISSUE FEE shown above.

II. PART B - FEE(S) TRANSMITTAL, or its equivalent, must be completed and returned to the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) with your ISSUE FEE and PUBLICATION FEE (if required). If you are charging the fee(s) to your deposit account, section "4b" of Part B - Fee(s) Transmittal should be completed and an extra copy of the form should be submitted. If an equivalent of Part B is filed, a request to reapply a previously paid issue fee must be clearly made, and delays in processing may occur due to the difficulty in recognizing the paper as an equivalent of Part B.

III. All communications regarding this application must give the application number. Please direct all communications prior to issuance to Mail Stop ISSUE FEE unless advised to the contrary.

**IMPORTANT REMINDER:** Utility patents issuing on applications filed on or after Dec. 12, 1980 may require payment of maintenance fees. It is patentee's responsibility to ensure timely payment of maintenance fees when due.

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**INSTRUCTIONS:** This form should be used for transmitting the ISSUE FEE and PUBLICATION FEE (if required). Blocks 1 through 5 should be completed where appropriate. All further correspondence including the Patent, advance orders and notification of maintenance fees will be mailed to the current correspondence address as indicated unless corrected below or directed otherwise in Block 1, by (a) specifying a new correspondence address; and/or (b) indicating a separate "FEE ADDRESS" for maintenance fee notifications.

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20995 7590 02/25/2010

**KNOBBE MARTENS OLSON & BEAR LLP  
2040 MAIN STREET  
FOURTEENTH FLOOR  
IRVINE, CA 92614**

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I hereby certify that this Fee(s) Transmittal is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage for first class mail in an envelope addressed to the Mail Stop ISSUE-FEE address above, or being facsimile transmitted to the USPTO (571) 273-2885, on the date indicated below.

(Depositor's name)
(Signature)
(Date)

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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09/648,474 08/21/2000 Brian Mark Shuster KM0345.007CP1 5826

**TITLE OF INVENTION: METHOD, APPARATUS AND SYSTEM FOR HOSTING INFORMATION EXCHANGE GROUPS ON A WIDE AREA NETWORK**

APPLN. TYPE	SMALL ENTITY	ISSUE FEE DUE	PUBLICATION FEE DUE	PREV. PAID ISSUE FEE	TOTAL FEE(S) DUE	DATE DUE
nonprovisional	NO	\$1510	\$0	\$0	\$1510	05/25/2010

EXAMINER	ART UNIT	CLASS-SUBCLASS
NGUYEN, DUSTIN	2454	709-200000

1. Change of correspondence address or indication of "Fee Address" (37 CFR 1.363).

☐ Change of correspondence address (or Change of Correspondence Address form PTO/SB/122) attached.

☐ "Fee Address" indication (or "Fee Address" Indication form PTO/SB/147; Rev 03-02 or more recent) attached. **Use of a Customer Number is required.**

2. For printing on the patent front page, list

(1) the names of up to 3 registered patent attorneys or agents OR, alternatively,

1

(2) the name of a single firm (having as a member a registered attorney or agent) and the names of up to 2 registered patent attorneys or agents. If no name is listed, no name will be printed.

2

3

3. ASSIGNEE NAME AND RESIDENCE DATA TO BE PRINTED ON THE PATENT (print or type)

PLEASE NOTE: Unless an assignee is identified below, no assignee data will appear on the patent. If an assignee is identified below, the document has been filed for recordation as set forth in 37 CFR 3.11. Completion of this form is NOT a substitute for filing an assignment.

(A) NAME OF ASSIGNEE

(B) RESIDENCE: (CITY AND STATE OR COUNTRY)

Please check the appropriate assignee category or categories (will not be printed on the patent): ☐ Individual ☐ Corporation or other private group entity ☐ Government

4a. The following fee(s) are submitted:

- ☐ Issue Fee  
☐ Publication Fee (No small entity discount permitted)  
☐ Advance Order - # of Copies \_\_\_\_\_

4b. Payment of Fee(s): (Please first reapply any previously paid issue fee shown above)

- ☐ A check is enclosed.  
☐ Payment by credit card. Form PTO-2038 is attached.  
☐ The Director is hereby authorized to charge the required fee(s), any deficiency, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number \_\_\_\_\_ (enclose an extra copy of this form).

5. **Change in Entity Status** (from status indicated above)

☐ a. Applicant claims SMALL ENTITY status. See 37 CFR 1.27.

☐ b. Applicant is no longer claiming SMALL ENTITY status. See 37 CFR 1.27(g)(2).

NOTE: The Issue Fee and Publication Fee (if required) will not be accepted from anyone other than the applicant; a registered attorney or agent; or the assignee or other party in interest as shown by the records of the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

Authorized Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.311. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 12 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450.

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## Determination of Patent Term Adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154 (b) (application filed on or after May 29, 2000)

The Patent Term Adjustment to date is 1389 day(s). If the issue fee is paid on the date that is three months after the mailing date of this notice and the patent issues on the Tuesday before the date that is 28 weeks (six and a half months) after the mailing date of this notice, the Patent Term Adjustment will be 1389 day(s).

If a Continued Prosecution Application (CPA) was filed in the above-identified application, the filing date that determines Patent Term Adjustment is the filing date of the most recent CPA.

Applicant will be able to obtain more detailed information by accessing the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) WEB site (<http://pair.uspto.gov>).

Any questions regarding the Patent Term Extension or Adjustment determination should be directed to the Office of Patent Legal Administration at (571)-272-7702. Questions relating to issue and publication fee payments should be directed to the Customer Service Center of the Office of Patent Publication at 1-(888)-786-0101 or (571)-272-4200.

**Notice of Allowability****Application No.**

09/648,474

**Applicant(s)**

SHUSTER ET AL.

**Examiner**

DUSTIN NGUYEN

**Art Unit**

2454

**-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--**

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERIT IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 10/22/2009.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 50, 52, 55-60, 63, 65, 67, 70-79, 81-96, 98-102, now renumbered as 1-42.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some\* c) ☐ None of the:  
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.  
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.  
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* Certified copies not received: \_\_\_\_\_.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

**THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.**

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.  
(a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached  
1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.  
(b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.  
**Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).**
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

**Attachment(s)**

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08),  
Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413),  
Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☐ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_.

/DUSTIN NGUYEN/  
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 2454

### **EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT**

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment to the claims was given in a telephone interview with Applicants' attorney, Mr. Russell Jeide, on 02/12/2010.

#### **I. Specification Amendment**

1. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 1, lines 5 of the specification as follows:

This application is a continuation-in-part of co-pending U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/548,804, now abandoned, filed April 14, 2000, which application is specifically incorporated herein, in its entirety, by reference.

2. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 17, lines 6 of the specification as follows:

Like posts and users, links 326 are preferably ranked using rating data provided by users 310. Additionally, it is preferable to include the amount of Web traffic provided by a site's return link 326' to the Webroom 301a as a ranking factor, to encourage and promote Webroom traffic. Commercial factors, such as payment and contractual terms, may also be considered in ranking,

preferably using a weighted system as described in the co-pending U.S. Patent Application, Serial No. 09/548803, still pending, "METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR SEARCHING A WIDE AREA NETWORK," filed April 14, 2000, which application is specifically incorporated herein, in its entirety, by reference. In this manner the costs of hosting Webrooms may be defrayed, and a profit motive for hosting and promoting Webroom growth may be provided. However, to ensure that external sites with the most closely related topics and best information receive the highest ranked links, thereby optimizing the topical organization and information content of the system 302, the highest importance in the rating scheme is preferably assigned to topical rating information.

3. Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 45, lines 27 of the specification as follows:

Preferably, selected topline ranking information may be viewed by Webroom users. For example, topline menu 1160 is preferably provided on root menu page 570, as illustrated in Fig. 11C. Menu 1160 preferably contains a list 1164 of topline links in a ranked order. Each topline link in the list comprises a hyperlink 1161 to its related Web page (or Web site), and is preferably provided with a hyperlink 1162 to a topline information page 1170. Each topline link may additionally be provided with a way to vote on the linked Web site, such as a vote button (not shown) similar to those used for voting on posts. Information page 1170 is preferably provided, with graph 1174 or other presentation of page activity and rating information, specific activity information, such as last revision date 1175 and average use level 1176. A brief summary 1178 of page content is also provided. Additionally, page 1170 preferably includes a hyperlink 1180 to a Web map page 1181. A Web map is a page for mapping a Web page or web site, as described in the co-pending U.S. Patent Application, Serial No. 09/549505, now U.S. Patent No. 7,546,530, "METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR MAPPING A SITE ON A WIDE AREA NETWORK," filed April 14, 2000, which application is specifically incorporated herein, in its entirety, by reference. Topline menu 1160 additionally includes more button 1166 for scrolling forward through the topline list, and a back button 1169 on applicable displays 1168 of the topline, for scrolling backwards. In an embodiment of the invention, a different topline menu 1160 is provided for different, categorized lists of links; for example, a list of "expert" links and a list of "fun" links. Additionally, lists of nominated links are preferably provided in a format similar to the topline menu 1160.

## II. Claim Amendment

Please amend the claims as follows:

50. (Currently amended) A computer-implemented method for exchanging information within a group of users on a wide area network, comprising:

- servicing a topic-specific user interface to a plurality of remote clients over a wide area network;

- receiving information posts responsive to a defined topic;

- receiving a plurality of links to respective different remote information resources, each containing information related to the defined topic from certain of the plurality of remote clients, wherein the plurality of links are distinct from the information posts;

- updating the topic-specific user interface to include the information posts and the plurality of links;

- updating the topic-specific user interface to include user-interface objects associated with respective posts or links, wherein the user interface objects are configured to enable users to rate the relevance of respective ones of the information posts and of the plurality of links to the defined topic;

- receiving user ratings from the plurality of remote clients responsive to the user-interface objects;

- aggregating the user ratings from the plurality of remote clients to determine aggregate relevance ratings data;

- updating the topic-specific user interface so that the information posts and the plurality of links in the topic-specific user interface are displayed in a ranked order according to the aggregate relevance ratings data; [[and]]

- servicing the updated topic-specific user interface to requesting users;[[,]]

and

- receiving preference information from respective requesting users, wherein the preference information specifies a threshold aggregate relevance ratings data and wherein the topic-specific user interface includes ones of the information posts having aggregate relevance ratings data that exceed the threshold and does not include ones of the information posts having aggregate relevance ratings data less than or equal to the threshold;

wherein at least some of the method is performed by a suitably configured computing system having one or more computing devices.

64. (Canceled)

65. (Currently amended) The method according to Claim 50 **[[Error! Reference source not found.]]**, further comprising serving an interactive tolerance bar for providing the users an option to send the preference information.

71. (Currently amended) A computing system comprising one or more computing devices including memory and configured to exchange information within a group of users on a wide area network, comprising:

- a computing device operative to:

- provide a topic-specific user interface that enables display of a defined topic to a plurality of remote clients over a wide area network;

- receive information posts responsive to the defined topic and a plurality of links to respective different remote information resources each containing information related to the defined topic;

- receive user ratings indicating relevance of respective ones of the information posts to the defined topic and relevance of ones of the plurality of links to the defined topic;

- aggregate the user ratings to determine aggregate relevance ratings for respective information posts and links; and

- update the topic-specific user interface to include the information posts and the plurality of links in a ranked order according to the aggregate relevance ratings for respective information posts and links;

- receive preference information from respective requesting users, wherein the preference information specifies a threshold aggregate relevance ratings and wherein the topic-specific user interface includes ones of the information posts



having aggregate relevance ratings that exceed the threshold and does not include ones of the information posts having aggregate relevance ratings less than or equal to the threshold; and

a data store in communication with the computing device, the data store operative to store at least one of the information posts, the plurality of links, and the user ratings.

83. (Currently amended) A computer-implemented method for exchanging information, the method comprising:

generating a user interface for display of a defined topic that enables user input of information posts related to the defined topic and a plurality of links to respective different remote information resources each containing information related to the defined topic;

for respective information posts,

receiving user ratings indicating relevance of respective information posts to the defined topic from respective users;

aggregating the user ratings for respective information posts to determine aggregate relevance ratings for respective information posts; and

wherein at least some of the information posts are listed in the user interface in a ranked order according to the aggregate relevance ratings for the information posts;

receiving a threshold aggregate relevance rating from respective requesting users, wherein the topic-specific user interface includes ones of the information posts having aggregate relevance ratings that exceed the threshold and does not include ones of the information posts having aggregate relevance ratings less than or equal to the threshold; and

for respective links,

measure activity of respective links; and,

for each link whose measured activity exceeds a selected value, update the user interface to include the respective link in the user interface.

92. (Currently amended) A tangible computer-readable storage medium having instructions stored thereon, the instructions comprising:

instructions for serving a topic-specific user interface to a plurality of remote clients over a wide area network;

instructions for receiving information posts responsive to the defined topic and a plurality of links to respective different remote information resources, each containing information related to the defined topic from certain of the plurality of remote clients, wherein the plurality of links are distinct from the information posts;

instructions for updating the topic-specific user interface to include the information posts and the plurality of links;

instructions for updating the topic-specific user interface to include user-interface objects associated with respective posts or links, wherein the user interface objects are configured to enable users to rate the relevance of respective ones of the information posts and of the plurality of links to the defined topic;

instructions for receiving user ratings from the plurality of remote clients responsive to the user-interface objects;

instructions for aggregating the user ratings to determine aggregate relevance ratings rankings;

instructions for updating the topic-specific user interface so that information posts and the plurality of links in the topic-specific user interface are displayed in a ranked order according to the aggregate relevance ratings rankings; [[and]]

instructions for serving the updated topic-specific user interface; and instructions for receiving a threshold aggregate relevance rating, wherein the topic-specific user interface includes ones of the information posts having aggregate relevance ratings that exceed the threshold and does not include ones

of the information posts having aggregate relevance ratings less than or equal to the threshold.

93. (Currently Amended) The tangible computer-readable storage medium according to Claim 0, further comprising instructions for aggregating user ratings for information posts associated with one or more selected users to provide a user rating score.

94. (Currently Amended) The tangible computer-readable storage medium according to Claim 0, further comprising instructions for ranking the one or more selected users according to each user's respective user rating score.

95. (Currently Amended) The tangible computer-readable storage medium according to Claim 0, further comprising instructions for updating the user interface to include one or more of the user rating scores.

96. (Currently amended) The tangible computer-readable storage medium according to Claim 0, further comprising instructions for performing an action selected from adding a link to the plurality of links, and deleting a link from the plurality of links, according to the aggregated relevance ratings [[data]].

97. (Canceled)

98. (Currently Amended) The tangible computer-readable storage medium according to Claim 96 [[97]], further comprising instructions for serving an interactive tolerance bar for providing the users an option to send the preference information.

99. (Currently Amended) The tangible computer-readable storage medium according to Claim 0, further comprising instructions for ranking the plurality of

links according to measurement of activity of respective ones of at least a portion of the plurality of links.

100. (Currently Amended) The tangible computer-readable storage medium according to Claim 0, wherein measurement of activity of respective ones of the plurality of links comprises measurement of at least one of a first number or requests received by the user interface for the respective remote information resources of the plurality of links and a second number of requests received for the user interface from the respective remote information resources of the plurality of links.

101. (Currently Amended) The tangible computer-readable storage medium according to Claim 0, wherein the ranking of respective ones of the information posts and the plurality of links are time dependent.

102. (Currently Amended) The tangible computer-readable storage medium according to Claim 0, wherein the ranking of respective ones of the information posts and the plurality of links decrease with time absent receipt of new user ratings.

### ***Conclusion***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to DUSTIN NGUYEN whose telephone number is (571)272-3971. The examiner can normally be reached on Flex.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Nathan Flynn can be reached on 571-272-1519. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/DUSTIN NGUYEN/  
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 2454